

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the abstract with the following amended abstract:

~~The present invention relates to a~~An *in vitro* method for screening agents that inducing islet cell neogenesis or duct-to-islet cell transdifferentiation, which ~~comprises the steps of:~~ includes a) expanding in vitro cells of a duct-like structure obtained by inducing cystic formation in cells in or associated with post-natal islets of Langerhans; b) treating said expanded cells of said duct-like structure with an agent screened; and c) determining potency of said agent of inducing islet cell differentiation of said duct-like structure in becoming insulin-producing cells.